

**EXPEDITED  
Plan Review****Newsletter**

## County Training Set for February 25

All prospective Peer Reviewers must attend County training prior to obtaining County certification under the *Expedited Plan Review Program*. The first County training will be offered on Wednesday, February 25 at 1:00 p.m. in Room 106 of the Herrity Building, 12055 Government Center Parkway. For directions call (703) 222-0801 or visit our web site at [www.co.fairfax.va.us/gov/dem](http://www.co.fairfax.va.us/gov/dem).

Candidates must have successfully completed all required examinations and obtained BOCA certifications prior to attending County training; however, this requirement for BOCA certification has been waived for the February class. Candidates will be eligible for county certification after completing County training, obtaining BOCA certification and providing proof of a valid license or professional registration in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

County training will cover various topics not covered in the BOCA and International Codes including County related requirements, submission requirements and the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code.

The next County training after the February date will take place in late spring after the next testing window has concluded; see below.

### BOCA Certification

Each Peer Reviewer must hold a valid certification from BOCA for the specific component for which he or she is responsible under the *Expedited Plan Review Program*.

BOCA certification is obtained by successfully completing the required examinations, as administered by the National Certification Program for

Construction Code Inspectors (NCPCCI). Computerized exams can be taken periodically throughout the year at convenient locations in the metropolitan area. Exam results are available at the completion of the exam. To obtain an application, fee information or the *Candidate Bulletin of Information*, as published by NCPCCI, contact:

The Chauncey Group, NCPCCI Program  
P.O. Box 6508  
Princeton, N.J. 08541-6508  
(609) 951-1230  
[www.chauncey.com](http://www.chauncey.com)

An application for exam registration must be received by the Chauncey Group by the cut off dates noted below. Once registered, candidates will receive an *Authorization To Test* card that is required to schedule an exam appointment at a testing center within the testing window dates.

Registration Cut off Date:	Testing Window:
March 16	April 25-May 2
May 8	June 20-27
July 10	August 22-29
September 10	October 24-31
November 1	December 12-19

To obtain certification from BOCA after all the required exams have been passed, prospective Peer Reviewers must send an application to BOCA with the required fee for each certification. To maintain BOCA certification, additional training and classes must be attended periodically. BOCA has examination study guides available for purchase. To obtain certification, study guides or

additional information contact:

Building Officials and Code  
Administrators International  
4051 West Flossmoor Road  
Country Club Hills, IL 60478-5795  
(800) 323-1103  
[www.bocai.org](http://www.bocai.org)

Candidates must be individually certified as a Plans Examiner for each BOCA component for which they seek Peer Reviewer status. Prior to certification, the following examinations must be successfully completed:

**Architectural/Structural  
Plans Examiner:**

Building General (exam 1B)  
Building Plan Review (exam 1C)  
Fire Protection General (exam 3B)  
Fire Protection Plan Review (exam 3C)

**Mechanical Plans Examiner:**

Mechanical General (exam 4B)  
Mechanical Plan Review (exam 4C)

**Plumbing Plans Examiner:**

Plumbing General (exam 5B)  
Plumbing Plan Review (exam 5C)

**Electrical Plans Examiner:**

Electrical General (exam 2B)  
Electrical Plan Review (exam 2C)

### Competency

Can anyone with a valid state registration and the appropriate BOCA certifications be a peer reviewer for any design component? The answer to that question is based on the competency of the registered professional in that particular component. Architects and engineers are

bound by the same obligations under the *Expedited Plan Review Program* as they are by their state registration.

The Rules and Regulations for licensed professionals, as regulated by Chapter 4 (§54.1-400 et seq.) of Title 54.1 of the Code of Virginia and printed by the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation, state the following:

*"The professional shall undertake to perform professional assignments only when qualified by education or experience and licensed or certified in the profession involved."*

That means only a registered professional competent in a specific building component, i.e., architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical and plumbing shall provide peer review services for such component.

## County Contact

The Department of Environmental Management is committed to assisting anyone interested in taking part in the *Expedited Plan Review Program*.

County staff can provide the design community with the support needed to make the *Expedited Plan Review Program* a success. In fact County staff is available to visit area design firms or entire design teams to explain the program and answer any questions first hand.

For additional information or to schedule a meeting at your firm, please call Brian Foley, Chief Building Engineer, at (703) 324-1960 or e-mail him at [bfoley@co.fairfax.va.us](mailto:bfoley@co.fairfax.va.us).

## Research Reports

With a flurry of new products available for use in the construction industry each year, the average code official would require a huge staff to evaluate and test these products to determine if they are capable of functioning as the manufacturers claim and the code requires. Fortunately, the model code agencies, BOCA, ICBO and SBCCI, conduct these evaluations and tests themselves and print their results in research reports or evaluation reports.

There is an evaluation service for each model code agency in addition to a

combined service appropriately called the National Evaluation Service (NES). Each evaluation provides independent and objective analysis to determine any conditions which may exist for a product to be in compliance with the code. Reports from all four sources are accepted by Fairfax County.

The most important section of the reports is the one entitled "Instructions to the Code Official." There, the agency has outlined the products' limitations, conditions for use and requirements for plan review submittal. For instance, many exterior wall covering products may also be used as structural sheathing to resist horizontal wind load. If this is the designer's intent, then the instructions in the research report must be strictly followed. Some sheathing product's research reports require a complete wind load analysis to be conducted and submitted to the building official. The report also provides the required attaching scheme for the corresponding horizontal load, and it requires the scheme to be shown on the construction documents. Construction documents which do not satisfy these requirements are not approvable.

A list of current BOCA Research Reports and NES Evaluation Reports are printed quarterly by BOCA Evaluation Service in a publication entitled *National Product Evaluation Listing*. If the report number is not listed in this publication, the report is not valid.

To contact BOCA Evaluation Services, call (800) 323-1103 or e-mail at [bocaes@bocai.org](mailto:bocaes@bocai.org).

## April 15, 1998

On April 15, 1997, the 1996 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC) went into effect. All projects submitted to the County after that day must comply with the provisions of that code, UNLESS, the construction documents were substantially complete prior to that date. In those cases, the 1993 VUSBC may apply for up to one year.

What does that mean? It means that a project submitted between April 15, 1997 and April 14, 1998 may use either the 1993 or 1996 VUSBC if the design began prior to April 15, 1997.

All projects submitted on or after April 15, 1998 must comply with the 1996

VUSBC with no exceptions. As that date approaches, an influx of permit applications is expected to occur in order to beat the cut off date.

## Code Interpretation

Each edition of the *Expedited Plan Review Newsletter* will include a code interpretation which may serve as assistance to Peer Reviewers. Code interpretations are prepared and printed by BOCA in a publication entitled *BOCA National Code Interpretations*, and recent interpretations can be found on the BOCA Home Page at [www.bocai.org](http://www.bocai.org).

FORMAL Code Interpretation No. 34/305/81 (R). Approved August 5, 1996. BOCA National Building Code/1996 Sections 502.0.

Question: Is the definition of "Area, building" in Section 502.0 intended to include the thicknesses of a building's exterior walls to determine compliance with height and area limitations?

Answer: No. Building area is intended to only include such area within or between surrounding exterior walls or exterior walls and fire/party walls. However, any area contained within the maximum horizontally projected area due to the story above is to be included. Where the roof or other architectural projections extend past the exterior wall, the area below shall also be considered as building area if the space is classified in one of the occupancies listed in Section 302.1. Height and area limitations are a function of both the occupancy hazard and fire resistance rated construction contained within the building rather than in the exterior shell itself.

## Peer Reviewers

Each newsletter will provide a list of certified Peer Reviewers and their respective discipline. This list will be used to assist the design community in obtaining Peer Reviewers for projects to be submitted under the *Expedited Plan Review Program*. This list may be advantageous for small firms who may wish to trade peer review services with other small firms.